
**BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group
Meeting Summary
November 17, 1997**

The eighteenth meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was held on Monday, November 17 at the Resources Building in Room 1131 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 noon.

BDAC Members of the Work Group:

Roberta Borgonovo
Ann Notthoff

Invited Participants in Attendance:

Gary Bobker
Pete Chadwick
Buford Holt
Pete Rhoads
Tom Zuckerman

CALFED Staff/ Consultants in Attendance:

Dick Daniel
Bellory Fong
Sharon Gross
Marti Kie
Peter Kiel
Scott McCreary
Martha Turner

Other Participants in Attendance:

Kati Buehler
John Cain
Mark Cocke
Dan Craig
Vern Finney
Steve Ford
Liz Howard
Brenda Johnson
Walter Kornichuk
Norma Miller
Joe Miyamoto
Dennis O'Connor
Rudolf Ohlemuber
Susan Oldland
Dennis Pendleton
Karen Shaffer
John Winther

Draft Meeting Summary

Roberta Borgonovo (Chair, BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group) began the meeting at 1:40 p.m. with introductions and a discussion of the agenda. The primary purpose of the meeting was to assess the findings of the Scientific Panel and to formulate recommendations for BDAC and CALFED to revise the ERPP.

Assessment of Scientific Review Panel's Six Primary Findings

Dick Daniel asked the Work Group to prioritize the primary findings of the Scientific Review Panel and suggested possible CALFED responses.

Participants reviewed the Panel's six findings and offered recommendations. The following are the Work Group's recommendations sent to the December 12 meeting of BDAC and represent the discussion of the Work Group meeting:

- I. ***Clarify the approach to restoration and rehabilitation.*** The Work Group agreed with the Panel that the ERPP should state under what circumstances restoration and rehabilitation would occur in order to clarify the policy intent of the Program. Most participants thought that the tension between restoration and rehabilitation is partly an issue of semantics; the general term "restoration" includes rehabilitation as well. The Work Group understands that restoring the entire Bay-Delta landscape to its historic condition may not be possible but agreed that it is unnecessary to change the title of the ERPP to reflect rehabilitation since the primary focus of the program is on restoration of ecological functions.
 - A. ***Create a map showing geographically where restoration or rehabilitation will occur.***
 - B. ***The ERPP should adopt an anti-degradation policy to conserve existing habitat and habitat restored by the ERPP.***
- II. ***Simplify and focus the goals and approach of the ERPP.*** The Work Group agreed with the Panel's advice to create a clearly articulated big picture vision of the ERPP that the public, stakeholders and scientists can seize upon. The Work Group commended the excellent job ERPP staff have done to comprehensively identify the components of the ecosystem that require restoration, but said that the public requires a plan with more concise integration of its components. A technical writer capable of distilling the complexity of ecological restoration to the general public should be hired to assist CALFED staff.
 - A. ***Write an ERPP Strategic Plan or Executive Summary*** that simplifies its goals and approach and includes a timeline for completion of items currently lacking in the document for inclusion in the draft Programmatic EIS/EIR.

- III. ***Continue development of a set of conceptual models.*** The Panel recommended that CALFED develop three sets of conceptual models: 1) landscape models for the entire system; 2) models for specific aspects of the system; 3) and quantitative simulation models. The Work Group suggested that the highest priority models are simple conceptual ecological models created to increase the public's understanding of ecosystem function and to convey the goals and approach of the ERPP as well as key themes for each region. CALFED should also continue development of more detailed, process- and habitat-specific models and quantitative models which enable the study of complex ecological linkages. Consultant scientists should be hired immediately to help ERPP staff develop these models. Models should then be reviewed in focused technical workshops.
- IV. ***CALFED should embed a Science Program into the ERPP*** in order to develop and address the complex scientific issues underpinning the ERPP. The Work Group concurred with the Panel's recommendation to implement a Science Program and suggested that this Science Program utilize staff experts, local/stakeholder scientists and independent scientists for three complementary activities. The Work Group agreed to work with staff at the next meetings to help implement this program and urged CALFED to establish this program by the Spring.
- A. ***Retain technical experts to augment the ERPP staff effort.*** ERPP staff effort should be augmented as soon as possible with technical experts including independent scientists, consultants or agency specialists to address disciplines not represented on staff. Suggestions include to hire an hydrologist/fluvial geomorphologist, a landscape ecologist/ecological planner, an indicator specialist, an ecological modeler and a technical writer.
- B. ***Establish a standing science panel by Spring 1998.*** The Work Group concurred with the Panel's recommendation and suggested that work begin immediately to establish a standing science panel of outside, independent scientists and local stakeholder, agency and independent specialists to explore and develop the scientific issues of the ERPP. Elements of the ERPP which could benefit from the standing panel's review include review of testable hypotheses, targets and conceptual models.
- C. ***On a periodic basis, convene a panel of wholly independent scientists*** to review Program progress, much like the configuration of the October 6-9 Scientific Review Panel.
- V. ***Clearly articulate and present the ERPP's hypotheses for scientific review.*** The hypotheses underlying the ERPP should be explicitly stated and reviewed by the public and the standing science panel. The testing of these hypotheses would serve the basis of the adaptive management process and the monitoring program. The Work Group endorsed and amplified the Panel's recommendation for monitoring and stated that 1) monitoring should focus on testable hypotheses as well as those restoration actions that

are not driven by testable hypotheses and 2) monitoring should be clearly linked to research. The Work Group also suggested that the ERPP monitoring and research components should be integrated with the other CALFED monitoring programs like the water quality program.

- VI. *To the extent possible, incorporate the initial responses to the Panel's recommendations in the draft Programmatic EIR/EIS.* Early work on conceptual models, testable hypotheses and clarified goals should be displayed in a strategic plan or an executive summary.

HCP Update

Sharon Gross provided a brief update on the HCP. She stated that an HCP has two components: a conservation strategy to support the ERPP and an assurances component being developed in the Assurances Work Group. Joint meetings of the Ecosystem Restoration and Assurances Work Groups are needed.

Future Agenda Items

The Work Group suggested that setting up the ERPP Science Program is a top priority. Participants agreed to help CALFED determine the structure and potential candidates of the standing science group at the next meeting. Participants also requested that CALFED staff present the next drafts of conceptual models.

Public Comment

A resident of West Sacramento suggested that the Ecosystem Program, focusing on abstract ecological problems and on fish and wildlife, is not closely linked to human health and therefore fails to gain public interest and support. CALFED should tie ecosystem health to humans by testing the toxicology of drinking water in people, for example, mercury.

One participant asked for clarification of the proposed ERPP acreage impacts in the Delta, and stated that conversion of 120 to 180,000 acres concerns many people in the Delta. Dick Daniel replied that 120 to 180,000 acres would be impacted, but not all converted out of agricultural production. A large percentage of the acres propose "environmentally-friendly agriculture" including seasonal floodways which do not result in permanent conversion.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.